AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) Apparatus for continuous vertical casting of metal strips, comprising

a mould having top and bottom ends, an open-ended mould cavity with a mould entrance opening at the top end and a strip exit opening at the bottom end,

a tundish for holding molten metal, said tundish having a discharge opening in direct communication with the mould cavity to feed molten metal into the mould entrance opening past an interface between the tundish and the mould,

a sealing device forming a seal at said tundish-mould interface to prevent molten metal from entering said interface, and

a molten-metal feeding device for supplying molten metal to the tundish and maintaining a level of molten metal therein,

said sealing device comprises

an upwardly facing horizontal flat sealing element support surface on the mould at the top end thereof, said sealing element support surface extending about the mould entrance opening,

a flat downwardly facing surface on the tundish, said downwardly facing surface extending about the discharge opening of the tundish, and

a sealing element formed of a sheet of graphite and being in constant sealing engagement with both said horizontal sealing element support surface on the mould and said

downwardly facing surface of the tundish, said sealing element extending about the mould entrance opening and the discharge opening of the tundish.

2. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the mould comprises a pair of side walls, each side wall comprises a vertical graphite block formed from a stack of elongate graphite laminae and one end of said block forms part of said sealing element support surface of the mould.

3. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the graphite laminae of the stack extend from the entrance opening of the mould cavity to the exit opening and wherein said part of the sealing element support surface on the mould is formed by the ends of the laminae.

4. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 3, wherein a plurality of coolant tubes extend horizontally through the graphite block through apertures formed in the graphite laminae.

5. (currently amended) Apparatus according to, claim 1 wherein the mould further comprises a pair of end walls of graphite which bridge gaps between [[the]]a pair of side walls, each of said side walls comprises a vertical graphite block, said end walls having flat horizontal upper end faces which are level with [[said]] one end of each of said graphite blocks and form parts of said sealing element support surface on the mould.

6. (previously presented) Apparatus according to, claim 1 wherein said downwardly facing surface of the tundish is slidable with respect to the sealing element.